



## Newsletter - June 2010

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### **REFLECTIONS - at the end of an Era**

**Phil and Esther Westwood**

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away .... no, perhaps not, but it was certainly a different world.

David and William were playing at Harpenden Juniors, when Barry Watts and Martin Wood (both still there, by the way, badminton is like that) suggested that David try out for the County squad. County? Sharp intake of breath. Phew!

Somewhat hesitantly, we went along, with two-year-old Emily in tow, to the U13 trials at Gosling, to take a peak at this elite, and found ourselves greeted and put at ease by a smiling Ken Winchester and the rest, as they say, is history.

Fourteen years, a zillion tournaments, umpteen Team Challenges, umpteen Shires League finals of all ages, how many RIOS, nine ICTs. so many friends (and a partridge in a pear tree) later, we have been privileged, probably uniquely so, to have gone 'through the system' four times.

David is now qualified coach and is back where it all began, helping at Harpenden Juniors. William captained Loughborough Students in winning the 2008 and 2009 BE Cups. Matthew is hiding his light at Kent University and Emily has finished her, and with it our (at least as parents), final HSBA season winning the U17 Nationals and U17 6-Nations on consecutive weekends. If Ken had handed us the script all those years ago, it would have been filed under 'Fairy Tales'.

None of this could have happened without the foundation laid, encouragement given and support provided by HSBA. Particularly those long-suffering 'front men', the team managers - Marion and Duncan Conway, John Smith, Hitesh Shah, Tony Clarke and Pat Walker, but indeed everyone who has served on the committee. So much time freely given, and always player-focussed. And Ken, of course, who is still smiling, and no wonder with such a team.

There have been many highlights and thrills. David's first tournament, an ESBA (remember those?) U13 at Harrow Leisure Centre. He won one box game, and the quality of play all around was an eye opener. A lad called Ouseph won it that day - I wonder what happened to him?! HSBA providing Emily's first ever winners medal, the U10 doubles (aged 7), with Hannah Warnes (aged 8). There was our first visit to that strange structure the Dome at Mildenhall for, as you will have guessed, an U13 Team Challenge Regional Round; also a strange structure, or so it seemed at the time. Years later Emily first went as a non-playing reserve, but with Herts' place secured over old rivals Essex, Marion and Duncan put her in a non-scoring doubles, so that she hand't gone all that way for nothing. As I said, always the players first.

Or 2003-4 perhaps, one Sunday at Stevenage all four children competing under one roof for the last time, winning five HSBA trophies, a once-in-a-lifetime proud day, seven between them for the season; and Emily's winning the U11 National Singles Challenge that June. And we haven't even come to ICTs and the tumult of Finals day; 2005 and 2006, twice second to Yorkshire - and in the latter final having led early on. In 2008 we had the privilege to be at the UK School Games, and the

thrill of Emily's Gold. In 2009 it was U17 Shires League final when an injury stole the team's chance of winning; but they set-to with a purpose and 'won' every game - if the conceded rubbers were discounted. They finished last but walked out, heads up, with the satisfaction of knowing their true worth.

And many, many more, but this year's ICT caps the lot; the team rose to the occasion early on - and never came down. The tension was unbearable. As each day wore on it was: 'Brilliant! But can they do it again?'; and they did, over and over, each contributing a vital win at some stage to maintain the team's momentum. They exceeded all expectations, except Tony's (he knew all along, of course), to come fourth and could even have won it had fate smiled. An unforgettable end to an unforgettable era for us.

Yes, it's a mere blink compared with Tony's 30 years, but I am sure he feels as we do, that it seems both like forever and no time at all. 2010-11 season will dawn with no Westwoods in the squad, but we'll be there in spirit, along with those cardboard cut-outs that Pat so kindly suggested should fill the space.

Best wishes and many, many thanks to HSBA, to all the players, parents, coaches and everyone who contributed to making those years such a pleasure and so rewarding for our boys, Emily and for us.

### Last HSBA Tournaments

**Barbara Lewczynska**

The last tournament of the season was a little less rushed as we only had four events as opposed to the usual six or seven. Angela had used the tournament software package to organise it and it all looked rather swish!!

A huge thank you to all the helpers on the day - Mike Newlove and Ash Kejriwal on the desk, Gordon Hatt and Sangeeta Dhall as court managers, Ken, Marion, Bindu and anyone else I have forgotten. Renu, Amy and Isabel also did a grand job on the raffle!!

### U13 Boys Singles

Twenty nine boys were in seven boxes of four or five. There were some close games in some of the boxes and the seeded players did not always get an easy ride. Daniel Fox had some tough games in his box as did Sam Newlove. However, everything else seemed to go as expected with positions one and two going into the main event and three and four (and five) progressing into the plate.

After the first round of the main event, the quarter finalists, with the exception of Alex Cleaver, were all squad members. There were some excellent games in these closing rounds, the scores not really reflecting the standard of play and the determination of the boys. In the semis, Jack Goode beat Andrew Baird and William Pickworth defeated Daniel Fox. The final was played between friends and U13 doubles champions Jack and William. It is obviously always hard facing a good friend across the net, but we saw a thrilling final, with Jack winning.

In the plate event, a special mention must to to Austin Ephgrave and Jack Kelly, who are still only at Junior School and are very young for this event. It is very hard for the boys to 'play up' like this.

As in the main event, all the matches were close and hard fought and eventually we got to the semis. In the top half of the draw Sairaj Kondan beat Jack Fosberry 21-5 and in the bottom half Jason Tian beat Senthuran Thayaparan 21-14.

The plate final was one of the most nail-biting matches of the whole tournament. Both boys played their hearts out - it really was touch and go all the way - until Sairaj just managed to squeeze out that last winning point.

### Results

Final: **Jack Goode** beat William Pickworth 21-11

Semi-finalists were Andrew Baird and Daniel Fox

Plate Final: Sairaj Kondan beat Jason Tian 22-20

### U13 Girls Singles

I think we knew all the girls!!! Seventeen of them contested this event and again it wasn't always easy for the seeds. Amy George was put to the test by young Emily Clarke in group A and the same for Isabel Hatt against Libby Jennings in group B. In group C we had a three way tie, with Renu Dhall-Chopra, Lia Willis and Zoe Taylor all winning two games apiece. For those of you familiar with BE rules (I did have to look it up just to make sure) it then goes on the points won, which meant that Lia was 1st, Renu 2nd and Zoe 3rd.

In the main draw semi, Amy beat Sophie Vernon 21-8 - again well done to Sophie as she is still at junior school - and Isabel narrowly beat Lia 21-18. As in the boys final, the two contenders were friends and U13 doubles champions. Another close nail-biter saw Amy winning and taking over the trophy from Isabel who had won it last season.

Heidi de Souza beat schoolmate Stephanie Shone 21-15 in one plate semi, while Zoe Taylor beat Daisy Roberts in the other 21-2. The final saw Zoe getting the chance to atone for missing out on the main event by beating Heidi.

### Results

Final; **Amy George** beat Isabel Hatt 21-17  
Semi-finalists were Sophie Vernon and Lia Willis  
Plate Final: Zoe Taylor beat Heidi de Souza 21-11

### U10 Girls Doubles

There were only six pairs of girls contesting this tournament, so they all went into one box, getting five games apiece. This was not walkover - many of the games were extremely close and there were clearly some determined girls in the competition. In the end, Keya Patani/Madeleine Powell were the eventual winners, with Hannah Ezard/Rachel Pridmore runners-up. Well done to all who competed.

### Results

**Winners Keya Patani / Madeleine Powell**  
Runners-up Hannah Ezard / Rachel Pridmore  
3rd Rachel Brazier / Bethany Fairey

### U10 Boys Doubles

Only one dropout in this competition (luckily in the box of five), which left us with three boxes of four. Chris Adey/Matthew Harden had little problem winning group A and went through into the main event with Joseph Christie/Shay Mehta. In group B Harry Goode/Jack Kimber made it through with Rees Clarke/James Davis and in group C it was Ben Quarrington-Carter/Sean Wright as well as Jacob Harper/Max Titterton.

The plate event consisted then of the remaining six pairs. In the quarter final play offs David Fraser/Milun Nair beat William Astley/Lewis Gellard, and Jess Tiplady/Christian Turner beat Christian Allen/Jack Taplin. One semi final saw Charlie Corke/David Wade, who had had a bye, beaten by Jess/Christian and in the other semi David/Milun beat Timothy Adams/Sam Jarman who had also gone through on a bye. The final was a real thriller, with both sets of boys digging in and showing great staying power, but it was David and Milun who finally clinched the title.

In the main event quarter finals, Ben/Sean beat Joseph/Shay and in the other Jacob/Max only just beat Harry/Jack. So the semis were set up with Ben/Sean beating Rees/James 21-11 in the bottom half and in the top half Chris/Matthew knocked out Jacob/Max 21-9. With all to play for, the more experienced Chris/ Matthew overcame Ben/Sean in the final, giving Chris his fourth title of the season. (I have just looked back in my records and the last person that managed to hold four titles in a season was Isabel Hatt in 2006/2007). Well done, Chris!!

### Results

Final: **Chris Adey/Matthew Harden** beat Ben Quarrington-Carter/Sean Wright 21-11  
Semi-finalists were Jacob Harper/Max Titterton and Rees Clarke/James Davis  
Plate Final: David Fraser/Milun Nair beat Jess Tiplady/Christian Turner 21-19

### U15 National Team Challenge Finals

John Stobo

The team: Conor Bambrick, Anna Collis, Alex English, Philippa English, Georgia Pittson, Mark Sadler, Oliver White, Matthew Widdicombe

The Herts U15 team had qualified for the National finals via a very narrow victory in the Eastern regional round, but we still felt confident of a good performance as we gathered on home ground at HSV for the finals. We had been training hard as a squad for the previous two weeks, but would our plans survive the encounters with our opponents?

First up was Nottinghamshire, a match which set the tone for the whole day. The 5-2 results in our favour may sound comfortable, but at the end of the match all the players knew we had been in a hard scrap, with Anna and Georgia's 21-19 victory probably the highlight of the tie. The next match, against Cheshire, yielded another victory, this time by 6-1 and was relatively straightforward, though Conor had to battle hard to achieve victory by 21-20 over his highly rated opponent.

By the time we had despatched Surrey 6-1 in the next round we felt we were really getting into our stride. I was particularly pleased to see the confident way in which Oliver/Philippa defeated their mixed doubles opponents by 21-3; victories for Conor/Oliver and Alex/Anna in the level doubles events by similarly emphatic margins showed our players demonstrating the ruthlessly competitive streak which is needed for success at this event, where one cannot afford to allow opponents the chance to stage a comeback. A fourth victory by 6-1 over Avon left us very handily placed at the halfway stage of the tournament, though this was a much closer affair than the Cheshire match and featured a nerve-jangling 21-20 win by Conor/Georgia in the first mixed doubles.

Unfortunately, we weren't quite able to sustain our impressive momentum for the final match of the first group phase, losing 2-5 to Buckinghamshire in a tie from which Mark, suffering from a combination of tiredness and a slight injury, had to be rested. Nonetheless, we had done well enough overall to progress to the top group for the second phase, where we would play for positions 1 to 4 in the tournament.

Opponents Yorkshire and Hampshire looked quite a daunting prospect for the second phase and the sense that, despite all the heroics of the morning, this might not be our day, was strengthened by the results of the three mixed doubles events against Yorkshire, two of which we lost by the agonizingly close margin of 20-21. Even so, the players bounced back well and the impressive victory Mark/Matthew achieved in their doubles must have been some consolation for their earlier narrow defeats. Sadly, in the format of the tournament, the mixed doubles results are critically important and, after losing all three of them, there was no way back for the Herts team and we eventually lost 2-5.

The last match against Hampshire seemed to be heading the same way, as we again lost all three mixed events, one of them featuring an extraordinary performance by Conor/Georgia against their England-ranked opponents that ended in yet another 20-21 defeat. The team's resilience and determination, not to mention their fitness at the end of a long hard day, enabled us to stage a strong fight-back, but it wasn't quite enough and we went down 3-4 when the very last match was taken by Hampshire.

Though the final two defeats left the Herts players feeling a little deflated at the conclusion of the tournament, walking out to receive our medals for fourth place was still a great moment at the day's end. Reflecting on the day as a whole, I would say that the team's achievement underlined the impressive progress the squad had made over the whole season. In the final reckoning, we were up there with the best county teams in the country. Pat Walker, who had volunteered to help me with the team management in Hitesh's absence, and I both felt that the players had given their utmost over the day and we congratulate them on their achievement.

### U15 Shires League Finals

John Stobo

The team: Conor Bambrick, Anna Collis, Lyall Daniels, Alex English, Philippa English, Hannah McLaren, Georgia Pittson, Mark Sadler, Oliver White, Matthew Widdicombe

The route to the Shires League finals had been a tortuous one for our U15 team, involving playing Essex twice in order to take top spot in our group.

Many of the opponents at the finals were familiar to us, so it was nice to play Derbyshire in the first round, a team of which we knew almost nothing except that they had come second in their regional group. The resulting victory by 13-7 was hard fought but deserved and it was pleasing to see our players picking up wins in all five events; three mixed doubles, two boys singles, three boys doubles, two girls singles and three girls doubles.

In the second round we were drawn against Hampshire, by contrast a very familiar enemy and a very tough one too. After the mixed doubles and the boys singles events, we were well placed at

6-2, but Hampshire did not win this year's National Team Challenge finals by accident and, with an exceptionally strong quartet of girls, they pulled the match back to 6-6 after the girls singles, despite the best efforts of all four Hertfordshire girls. We were still in the fight after halving the boys doubles, but once again the opposing girls proved too powerful in the doubles, and we slipped from 8-8 to lost 8-12.

This defeat left us playing Nottinghamshire for third place, and the team bounced back very well, taking the match by a fairly comfortable 13-7 margin to secure the bronze medals.

This result was probably as good as we could realistically have hoped for, given that Hampshire (winners) and Yorkshire (runners-up) were undoubtedly the outstanding teams of the tournament.

Our squad has made very good progress this season, especially in the mixed doubles, tactically the most complex of all the events, where the fruits of our training were evident in the 3-1 scores we achieved against each of the three counties we played. All the players should take great confidence from having confirmed their position as one of the top U15 County teams in the country.

I would like to thank Geoff Daniels, who managed the team with me on the day.

### **HSBA Junior Club Leagues 2010 - 11**

The HSBA Committee has asked me to organise the Junior Club Leagues for the next season. If your club may possibly be entering one or more teams into these competitions, please will you let me have the e-mail address and postal address of the current contact for your club.

Over the summer I hope that I can be in touch with the clubs that are hoping to enter one or more teams in these leagues. I will be looking to discuss changes that you would like to see in the format, timing and structure of these competitions. If you have any suggestions I would be pleased to receive them - preferably before September.

I am looking to launch the 2010/11 leagues near the start of October, as most clubs will not know their membership until that time.

Hoping to have your suggestions.

**Duncan Conway**

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#### **Tournament Results**

##### **Leicester Satellite**

Ladies Singles Final

**Emily Westwood** beat Jo Dix (Ha)  
21-14, 21-15

Mixed Doubles Final

Sam Dobson (Sy)/**Emily Westwood** lost to Emma Hendry/Kristian Roebuck  
15-21, 8-21

##### **Nottingham Challenger**

Ladies Doubles Quarter final

Sam Andrews (Bu)/**Emily Westwood** lost to Tracey Baker/Catherine Grant  
24-26, 21-19, 14-21

##### **U17 National Championships**

Girls Singles Final

**Emily Westwood** beat Holly Smith (Du) 21-18, 22-20

Girls Doubles Final

Lauren Bromley (St)/**Emily Westwood** lost to Mina Clarke (Ex)/Sophie Sankey (Bu)  
15-21, 18-21

Mixed Doubles Final                    **Ryan McCarthy**/Sophie Sankey (Bu) beat Sam Dobson (Sy)/**Emily Westwood**  
21-14, 19-21, 21-19

**U17 European 6-Nations Tournament**

Girls Singles Final                    **Emily Westwood** beat Anika Dorr (Germany)  
21-16, 21-16

Girls Doubles Final                    Lauren Bromley (St)/**Emily Westwood** lost to Sophie Brown (Yo)/Holly Smith (Du)  
17-21, 15-21

Mixed Doubles Final                    Sam Dobson (Sy)/**Emily Westwood** beat **Ryan McCarthy**/Sophie Sankey (Bu)  
21-14, 17-21,21-13

**U16 Kent**

Mixed Doubles Semi-final            Tommy Banham (Sf)/**Anna Collis** lost to **Conor Bambrick**/Alice Feesey (Dv)  
15-8, 9-15, 8-15

**U15 Nationals**

Mixed Doubles Semi-final            Tommy Banham (Sf)/**Anna Collis** lost to Sam Parsons/Eve O'Sullivan (Wk)  
16-21, 5-21

**U14 Kent**

Girls Singles Final                    **Anna Collis** lost to Paige Butler (Ke)  
10-15, 9-15

Girls Doubles Final                    **Anna Collis**/Tsui Yee Lau (Bu) beat Paige Butler / Stephanie Tillman (Ke)  
15-8. 15-9

**U14 Essex**

Girls Doubles Final                    **Anna Collis**/Lydia Powell (Sx) lost to Melissa Stride (Ha)/Brodie Miller (Ox)  
12-21

**U14 Warwickshire**

Girls Doubles Final                    **Anna Collis**/Jessica Pugh (Sh) lost to Sarita Patel (Le)/Nicola Gresty (Gl)  
12-15, 11-15

**From the Editor:** The HSBA AGM was held on June 24th. Apart from the committee there were very few other people. Although there are very few U11s at present, reports from all managers show a successful season with both U13s and U15 reaching the finals of the Shires League and the National Team Challenge. The U17s were 4th in the prestigious end of season Inter Counties Tournament. Joan Walters and Tony Clarke have now retired from the Committee and they and Duncan Conway were made vice-presidents of HSBA.

Thanks to everyone who contributed this time. I hope everyone has a good summer break and that you will all be ready, in September, to continue this season's successes.

**Deadline for the next newsletter is Wednesday, 1st September.**

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